

Department of Paediatric Respiratory and Sleep Physiology  
The Royal Hospital for Children and Young People, Edinburgh, EH16 4TJ

## What is a Sweat Test?

Children with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) often have higher levels of salt in their sweat. This test measures salt levels and can help confirm or rule out CF.

## Why does this need to be carried out?

This test is carried out on babies or children who get a lot of chest infections, recurrent cough, those who have frequent and unexplained loose and pale poo and those who are having problems gaining weight or growing properly. These children may have Cystic Fibrosis and it is important to diagnose this as soon as possible so that the best treatment can be started.

## What happens during the test?

Special pads are placed on your child's arm and are secured in place with Velcro straps. A small painless electric current is passed through the pads to stimulate the skin to produce sweat; this takes 5 minutes (some children say that it causes a tingling sensation). There will be a red mark where the pads have stimulated the skin. This is normal and nothing to worry about. A collecting device is placed over the stimulated area, secured in place with Velcro and a bandage. It takes 20-30 minutes for the sweat to collect. During this waiting time, your child can play and eat normally. The collecting device is then removed and sent to the laboratory for analysis.

To get an accurate result, enough sweat must be collected. If we do not get a big enough sample, we will arrange for you to come back to get the test repeated after 4 weeks.

This QR code will take you to a video of the test being performed >



## How long will it take?

Your appointment will last approximately 1 hour.

## Further questions

If you have further medical questions you should speak to the doctor who referred you for this test.

## How do I get my results?

The results will be sent to your consultant, who will contact you directly to discuss the results. Paediatric Cardiac, Respiratory & Sleep Physiology is unable to inform you of your results directly.

## Where are we located?

Respiratory Physiology is located in OPD 9.  
From the Main Entrance to Royal Hospital for Children and Young People, please report to Ground Floor Outpatient Reception Desk.

**If you have any other questions or need to change your appointment, please  
telephone: 0131 312 1124**